Now the tower was getting two glasses of milk each morning—one glass was for Misha, and Yegerev insisted that I have the second. After two days of this treatment, I told him that I felt much better, thanks to his medicine and milk. To prove my point, I let him feel my muscles. He agreed that I was out of danger. Then we started rotating our ration of milk among the eight of us. Misha had his glass every morning, and the others got half a glass every fourth day.

The fall of 1909 was unusually cold in Ekaterinoslav. The round wall of the tower was covered with a film of ice and finger-thick icicles formed on the window frame. The tower had no heat, but in the passage, between the circular ward and the hall, was a stove originally designed to keep the guard warm. Firewood was given to the inmates only on days when the temperature sank below freezing. The day's ration was four logs, each eighteen inches long and as thick as a man's arm, two matches, and a spoonful of kerosene. Because of the draft in the chimney, the stove could not raise the temperature of the air in the tower, but we could get heat that radiated from the mouth of the stove. We arranged the logs inside like a campfire and warmed our hands and feet before we went to sleep. Thus we were warm for at least half an hour each night.

This was a miserable existence—hunger, filth, and cold. I was tired of my self-imposed role of a strong man able to take anything without flinching. Realizing that I had to do something to keep my mind busy, I invented a task for myself to test whether I had retained any mental ability.

The only books we had in the tower were two bulletins of the Prussian Statistical Office that my mother had brought me. The guards let us keep them because of the big crowned eagles on the cover. These bulletins contained wage statistics of Prussia. I read and reread the tables until I had nearly memorized them. Then I decided to try to analyze correlations between the different series and find out whether they permitted any theoretical generalization. Thus I found myself engaged in a study of the theory of wages. During the day I thought of the figures, and at night, after having warmed my hands at the stove, I made calculations and wrote as long as I could hold the pencil between frostbitten, swollen fingers.

Later my book on wages was published in St. Petersburg. Tugan-Baranovsky, with his usual kindness toward me, referred to it in his course as a new theory of wages. Actually my ideas were very close to those that John Bates Clark had developed some two decades earlier. Neither Tugan nor I, however, had ever come across the works of the American economist, and the bargaining theory was new to us.